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I, KAY WARD, ACTING MANAGER EXAMINATION SUPPORT AND SALES hereby certify that annexed is a true copy of the Provisional specification in connection with Application No. PQ 2506 for a patent by E COM INDUSTRIES filed on 27 August 1999.



WITNESS my hand this  
Eleventh day of September 2000

*K. Ward*

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ACTING MANAGER EXAMINATION  
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AUSTRALIA  
Patents Act 1990

**PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION**

**Applicant(s) :**

E Com Industries  
A.C.N. 085 449 529

**Invention Title:**

E COMMERGE SYSTEM

The invention is described in the following statement:

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**BEST AVAILABLE COPY**E COMMERCE SYSTEM

The present invention relates to an electronic commerce system for facilitating the purchase of goods and services over a computer network, such as the Internet, and particularly, but not exclusively, relates to a, system which facilitates the purchase of gift vouchers which may be redeemed for payment or part payment of goods from subscribing retailers.

Although the following description will be given particularly in relation to the purchase of gift vouchers via the electronic commerce system of the present invention, it will be appreciated that the system is not limited to the purchase of gift vouchers and could be extended to be used for other items, such as tickets for transport, tickets for events and generally any items which can be purchased via a computer network such as the Internet.

Electronic commerce has vast potential for the exchange of goods/services items over computer networks, such as the Internet and the World Wide Web. The uptake of "e" commerce by the general public, however, has been slow, due to a number of problems, including security of payment (people are reluctant to give their credit card details over a network) and procedures for insuring that goods have been delivered (post, courier delivery and other mail is generally used to ensure that goods are delivered). The power of the computer network is not employed to deliver goods/services items partly because some items are not suitable for deliver over a computer network and also partly because it can be difficult that even items which are capable of being delivered over a network are correctly delivered. There is also a general lack of network location (e.g. "sites" including World Wide Web sites) which offer for sale a multiplicity of goods/services country wide and worldwide from a number of goods/service

providers - usually each web-site only provides goods/services of the retailers/manufacturers who own the web-site.

The provision of gift vouchers is a popular way for manufacturers/retailers to sell their products particularly given the advantages to people who wish to buy gifts for friends, loved ones and others but are not certain exactly what to buy them. Gift Vouchers are well known in general commerce. There are a number of difficulties, including those discussed above, however, in fully utilising the facilities of the Internet to obtain and distribute gift vouchers. Web-sites that operate gift voucher systems presently only allow for redemption of the gift vouchers by the operator of the gift voucher providing web-site. For example, a web-site is known which provides for the sale of books and other publications from the web-site. Gift vouchers are provided but must be redeemed by the operator of that web-site, i.e. for purchase of books and other publications from the company owning the web-site. Further, delivery of gift vouchers is usually by the standard prior art method of the postal service. That is, a person will purchase a gift voucher, it will be delivered to the intended recipient of the gift voucher by mail. The problem with utilising the computer network to deliver gift vouchers i.e. by electronic mail is that there are no reliable validation procedures. There is nothing to stop an unscrupulous person printing out multiple numbers of the same gift voucher delivered over email and attempting to redeem all copies. Email gift vouchers are known, but again, redemption is limited to the company who actually delivers the gift vouchers via email, and that way the company can ensure that only one gift voucher is redeemed and not multiple copies of the same email.

The present invention provides a method for the validation of a goods/services item delivered to an intended recipient over a computer network, the method

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comprising the steps of providing a first token associated with the goods/services item, requiring a person redeeming the goods/services item to provide the first token to a redemption system which on receipt of the first token  
5 records the goods/services item as redeemed.

Preferably, the system, on receipt of the first token, provides a further token to the person redeeming the goods/services item, the further token being associated with the goods/services item and acting as a receipt for  
10 redemption.

Preferably, the goods/services item is a gift voucher, airline ticket or ticket for an entertainment event. Preferably, the goods/services item is provided to the recipient by electronic mail.

15 Preferably, the first token is a number, which will hereinafter be termed a claim number, and a further token is preferably a further number, which will hereinafter be termed a receipt number.

In operation, the redeemer, who may be an operator at  
20 a store, where for example, the gift voucher is being redeemed, accesses the redemption system and provides the claim number to the redemption system. The redemption system preferably includes means for storing the claim number and means for comparing the claim number provided by  
25 the redeemer with the stored claim number. If the comparison is correct, the receipt number is provided to the redeemer and the system logs the gift voucher associated with the claim number as redeemed. The redemption system preferably includes a database storing  
30 information relating to the goods/services item associated with the claim number, and the information may include such things as the identity of the intended recipient of the goods/services item, address, operator who will be redeeming the gift voucher (e.g. book store, airline,  
35 entertainment, product owner), etc. The redemption system

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may be accessed via computer network, or, preferably, by telephone using interactive voice operation.

The present invention further provides a system for the validation of a goods/services delivered to an intended recipient over a computer network, the system comprising a  
5 database which records a first token associated with the goods/services item, means for accessing the database to enable the first token to be provided to the database by a person redeeming the goods/services items, means for  
10 comparing the first token provided to the database with the first token stored in the database and means for logging the goods/services item as redeemed when the first token provided to the database and the first token stored in the database match each other.

15 Preferably, there is further provided means for issuing a further token in response to the first token provided to the database and the first token stored in the database matching each other.

The present invention further provides a system for  
20 the provision of goods/services items to intended recipients for redemption in return for goods/services, the system comprising a computer network site accessible by users to obtain goods/services items, and a database which includes the identities of a plurality of different  
25 goods/services providers where goods/services items can be redeemed, and means enabling the user to select a goods/services item for anyone of the providers.

Preferably, the providers are retailers, airlines or entertainment providers, and the site is preferably a web-  
30 site and enables access to all different retailers that are subscribing to the web-site. Preferably, the goods/services item is a gift voucher, airline ticket or entertainment ticket which may be provided via email to the intended recipient.

35 Preferably, the database stores goods/items providers from different countries and of different categories and

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the user accessing the web-site can choose by category and country which goods/services item provider they wish to obtain and which goods/services item for.

The present invention further provides a  
5 goods/services item comprising a ticket or gift voucher, the ticket or a gift voucher being arranged to be provided by email and including an attachment with the email which includes graphic information on the attachment.

Where gift vouchers are presently provided by email,  
10 in the limited manner discussed in the preamble, they are usually provided as a plain email. Preferably, with the present invention, an attachment is provided which, when printed out, gives a pleasant aesthetic appearance to the gift voucher or ticket. Preferably, the attachment is  
15 provided as a JPEG attachment.

Features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following description of an embodiment thereof, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

20 Fig. 1 is a diagram of a system in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, and Figs 2 through 8 are diagrams illustrating web-site pages available on the web-site of the system of Fig. 1.

Referring to Fig. 1, a system is illustrated which  
25 enables the user to obtain gift vouchers for the redemption of goods/services from retailers which subscribe to the system. The system comprises a web-site 100 which can be accessed via the Internet by a person wishing to purchase a gift voucher for a person (intended recipient) they wish to  
30 purchase a gift for. The web-site 100 has access to a database 101 which stores information by country and category of multiple retailers subscribing to the system. The user 102 accessing the web-site can choose by country and category which retailer they wish to purchase a gift  
35 voucher for, e.g. a book shop, a record shop, etc. On selecting the particular gift voucher they wish to buy, the

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customer can enter a price they wish the gift voucher to be for, and details of the intended recipient, e.g. person's name and address (for recipient 103). On selecting the particular gift voucher, the customer 102 can they pay  
5 utilising the payment system 104 which we will described in more detail later on.

The gift voucher is then delivered by the system. It may be delivered by the postal service 105 but, in the preferred embodiment, where the intended recipient 103 has  
10 access to a computer, it will be delivered by electronic mail.

On delivery, as well as the gift voucher, the recipient 103 is provided with a claim number, which is a series of digits which is associated with the gift voucher  
15 and which is also recorded in the database 101 together with details of the gift voucher which is being delivered to the recipient.

Attending at the retailer 104, the retailer redeeming the gift voucher for the goods/services item, e.g. a book  
20 or other purchase, accesses the redemption system 107. Access in this embodiment is by way of telephone and interactive voice recognition system 108. It could just as easily be via computer network and the web-site, 100, however. On accessing, the retailer operative 106 enters  
25 the claim code by punching in the code on the telephone keys. The redemption system checks the claim code against the claim code stored in the database for the gift voucher and if the comparison is positive logs the gift voucher as redeemed and provides a receipt number, which is a further  
30 number, to the retailer. The retailer marks the receipt number on the gift voucher and the recipient signs the gift voucher. The gift voucher is then redeemed.

This redemption system prevents fraud by an unscrupulous recipient who may wish to print out many  
35 copies of an email. If the recipient tried to do this, using the same claim number, the redemption system 107



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would already have logged the gift voucher as redeemed. The retailer will not cash-in such a further gift voucher, without being provided with the receipt number.

5      Operation of the system will now be described in more detail with reference to the figures. The following description includes numbers in the left column which refer to the corresponding numbers of Fig. 1, showing how the system works.

10      www.giftvouchers.com System Notes

Purchase System

1.      Customer accesses web-site for purchase or to go to help desk services (Lost gift voucher, transfer to another person, request refund etc).
- 15      2.      Alternate customer access to the giftvouchers.com web-site via the Retailer's Web-site (if available)
3.      Link either to the giftvouchers.com Welcome Page or the (specified Retailer's) Gift Voucher Details Page.
4.      When customer purchases a gift voucher all details are  
20      stored in the database prior to going through the payment system in case payment fails in any way the order is logged (except credit card details).  
         Database must ensure that the limit per credit card is not exceeded (\$500/credit card/day, \$2,000/credit  
25      card/month). Database should also look out for anyone making large value purchases from the same email address especially if sending to themselves.

Fraud Screen Service

- 30      Credit card details when entered are cross checked against the database to ensure that:-
- (1) Credit card is still current.
  - (2) the expiry date on the credit card is no more than 5 years into the future as they will be fraudulent,

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(3) if customers have entered their card number with spaces, hyphens and any other non-numerical characters, these can be stripped out,

(4) expiry dates are converted to four digit format MMY with no extraneous characters such as/,

(5) Luhn's sum check is performed to eliminate made up numbers ([www.worldwidemart.com/scripts/ccver/shtml](http://www.worldwidemart.com/scripts/ccver/shtml) has a type of script for this), and

(6) the credit card is not a known "bad card" number in our database.

The web-site must ensure that once a customer has submitted their card details that they are unable to re-submit the transaction again until the transaction has been completed. This will prevent them accidentally paying twice for the same goods/services more than once. (E.g. attach a key to the transaction).

5. If database finds that the card is not a fraudulently listed card then transaction can continue to Cybersource Fraud Screen Service. If the credit card matches a card in the database which has been used fraudulently, then the customer is notified that the transaction has not been approved and to ring their bank or contact our help desk if they need help.

6. Credit Card details are sent to Cybersource for Fraud Screening.

7. When the credit card is recommended, then the transaction can continue to the Payment Gateway. If the credit card details are not recommended, then the customer (12) is notified that the transaction has not been approved and to ring their bank or contact our help desk if they need help.

#### Payment System

8. Recommended transactions are then sent to the Payment Gateway.

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9. Payment Gateway forwards information to the Banking Network ((a) IBM NetTrade Finance for International, and (b) Camtech for national) for real-time credit card clearance.
- 5 10. When the credit card is approved, then the transaction goes back to the Payment Gateway. If the credit card details are not recommended, then the customer (12) is notified that the transaction has not been approved and to ring their bank or contact our help desk if they need help.
- 10 11. Each transaction from the payment gateway is returned with a reference number which should be attached to the customer's order (this should not be used as a receipt number for the customer. The payment gateway also sends back response codes for the transaction (either as approved or declined (2 codes for approved, numerous with error messages for declined)).
- 15

#### Customer Notification

- 20 12. When the credit card is approved, the customer is notified of the outcome of the transaction, thanked for using the system and a receipt number is supplied. If the credit card details are not recommended, then the customer is notified that the transaction has not been approved and to ring their bank or contact our help desk if they need help.
- 25

#### Gift Voucher Generation

- 30 13. The web-site sends details back to the database. The database supplies fields for the JPEG image of the Retailer gift voucher which has the following fields (To: From: Amount: Name of recipient: Validity period (date, next working day) To (date, length to expiry set by each retailer), and Claim Code: (randomly generated). The gift voucher is housed at a specific IP address on the Net.
- 35

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Postal Service

14. The database sends out the gift voucher as per the customer's instruction with a receipt to the customer's email (unless specified that they do not want a receipt by email) - gift voucher may go to customer's email (for them to send / put in a card). E Com may communicate to past customers via email for marketing purposes. Registered users of the email reminder service will also be contacted via email re their reminders and for marketing purposes. Database will also be triggered to send email to the customer in the event of unsuccessful delivery to the recipient. Database will send email to customer of successful delivery to the customer nominated address.
15. Customer may deliver themselves.
16. Database may send info to gift vouchers.com postal service for delivery (list sent hourly) (Gift voucher + info on delivery name and address + message for card + card).
17. Postal service mails printout of email gift voucher in a card to recipient. E Com may communicate to gift voucher recipients via post for marketing purposes.
18. Database may deliver the gift voucher by email direct to recipient. E Com may communicate to gift voucher recipients via email for marketing purposes. Also email voucher will trigger a response to the database of successful delivery (and opened gift voucher). If delivery is unsuccessful, database will automatically send email to customer of unsuccessful delivery and request either they check the email and provide us with the correct email or that we deliver to them (possibly response could be made via form on the helpdesk - email to have hyperlink to here?).
19. Each day the database sends a file of newly purchased gift vouchers to the Call Center (Validation

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Service/Help Desk) so that they can update their database.

20. /26 IVR interfaces with the Call Centre database of gift vouchers.

5 Redemption

- 10 21. A recipient goes to a retailer to redeem their gift voucher. (Either in store (21a) or eventually on-line (21b)). A hyperlink from the retailer's web-site to the gifvouchers.com web-site may also be placed on the retailer's web-site and link to the Voucher form page for the specific retailer.

22. The retailer rings the IVR Validation service.

23. If the retailer is having problems with the IVR redemption they may speak to the help desk staff.

- 15 24. /25 Help desk staff access the database and record problems as they come in - they may also redeem a voucher if required.

20 27. Data on redeemed gift vouchers are sent daily to the giftouchers.com database, including phone number of the store where redemption took place.

28. Recipients with problems with their gift voucher redemption may ring the 1300 customer service desk number.

25 29. The database generates a monthly report emailed/sent to retailers on (1) gift voucher sales, (2) redeemed gift vouchers, and (3) payments made to the retailer with location of the store of redemption.

30 31. A link to the web-site will be placed in the delivered gift voucher email notification sent to the recipient. Recipient's will be able to access on-line help desk forms for submission to the database (Lost gift voucher, transfer to another person, request refund etc)

Payment to E Com ( designated system operator in this embodiment) and Retailers

32. Bank Merchant Facility

33. Banking network deposits money into E Com bank account via the E Com Merchant Bank Facility.

34. Database generates reports for E Com including (1) Sales by Retailer, (2) Redemptions by retailer, (3) Daily gift voucher payments to be made to retailers, (4) Postal service report including numbers of gift vouchers forwarded to the postal service and payments required to the service and (5) a report on any unsuccessful deliveries and action to be taken.

35. E Com forwards payments to retailers via DeskBank software. E Com updates database on payments made to retailers.

36. E Com pays postal service as per arranged method.

Retailer Web-site Access:

37. Retailer can log onto the web-site and download more regular reports of their (1) gift voucher sales, (2) redeemed gift vouchers, and (3) payments made to the retailer with location of the store of redemption.

Figs. 2 through 8 show in detail the structure of the web-site and give details of operation of the various web pages.

It will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that numerous variations and/or modifications may be made to the invention as shown in the specific embodiments without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention as broadly described. The present embodiments are, therefore, to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive.

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THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. A method for the validation of a goods/services item delivered to an intended recipient over a computer network, the method comprising the steps of providing a first token associated with the goods/services item, requiring a person redeeming the goods/services item to provide the first token to a redemption system which on receipt of the first token records the goods/services item as redeemed.

2. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein goods/services item is a gift voucher.

3. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein the goods/services item is a transport ticket.

4. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein the goods/services item is an entertainment ticket.

5. A method in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, wherein the goods/services item is delivered via electronic mail.

6. A method in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, comprising the further step of providing a further token on receipt of the first token, the further token being provided to the person redeeming the goods/services to acknowledge that the goods/services item has been redeemed.

7. A method in accordance with any one of the preceding claims, wherein the goods/services item can be purchased via computer network.

8. A system for the validation of a goods/services delivered to an intended recipient over a computer network, the system comprising a database which records a first token associated with the goods/services item, means for accessing the database to enable the first token to be provided to the database by a person redeeming the goods/services items, means for comparing the first token provided to the database with the first token stored in the

database and means for logging the goods/services item as redeemed when the first token provided to the database and the first token stored in the database match each other.

5 9. A system in accordance with claim 8, wherein the goods/services item is a gift voucher.

10. A system in accordance with claim 8, wherein the goods/services item is a transport ticket.

11. A system in accordance with claim 8, wherein the goods/services item is an entertainment ticket.

10 12. A system in accordance with any one of claims 8 to 11, further comprising means for providing a further token when the first token provided by the person redeeming the goods/services item and the first token stored in the database match.

15 13. A system in accordance with any one of claims 8 to 12, including means for providing the goods/services item via email.

20 14. A system for the provision of goods/services items to intended recipients for redemption in return for goods/services; the system comprising a computer network site accessible by users to obtain goods/services items, and a database which includes the identities of a plurality of different goods/services providers where goods/services items can be redeemed, means enabling the user to select a  
25 goods/services item for anyone of the providers.

Dated this 27th day of August 1999

E Com Industries

By their Patent Attorneys

30 GRIFFITH HACK



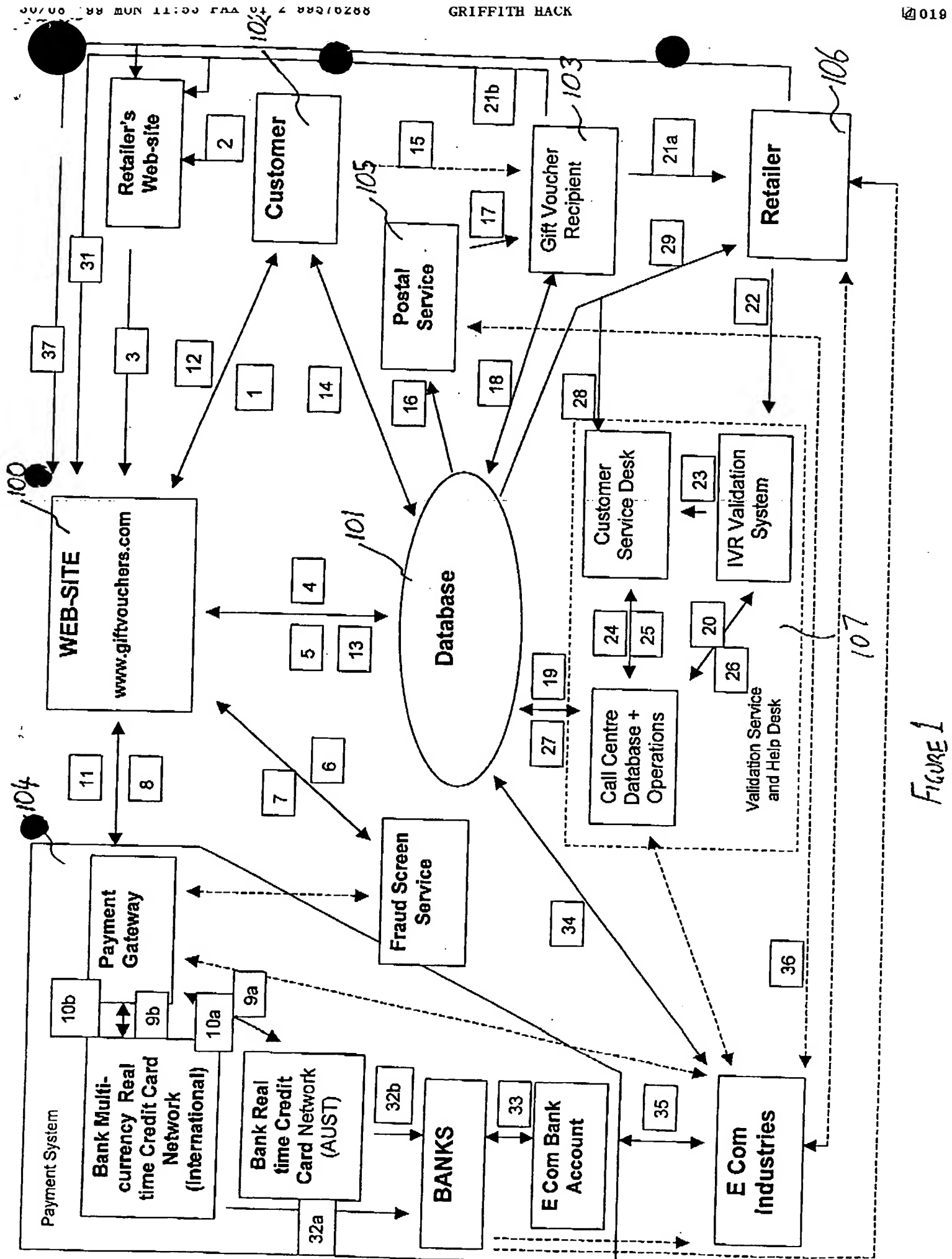


FIGURE 1

Web-site Flow and Links (almost all pages link back to Homepage even if not marked) (Web tracking software)

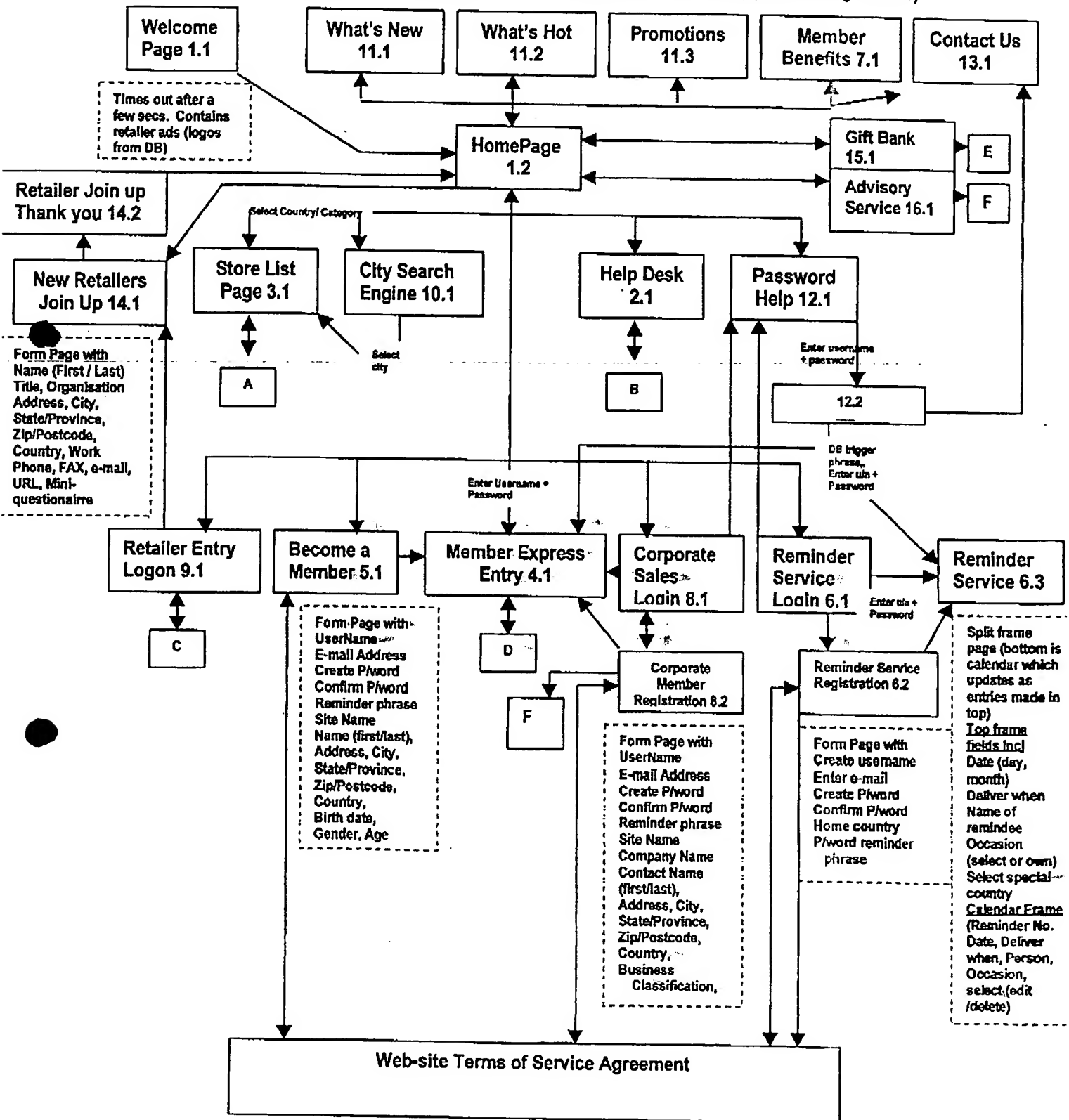


FIGURE 2

**All pages on this page link to the [HomePage HelpDesk](#) and [Shopping Bag](#) (top nav bar)**



Attachment B

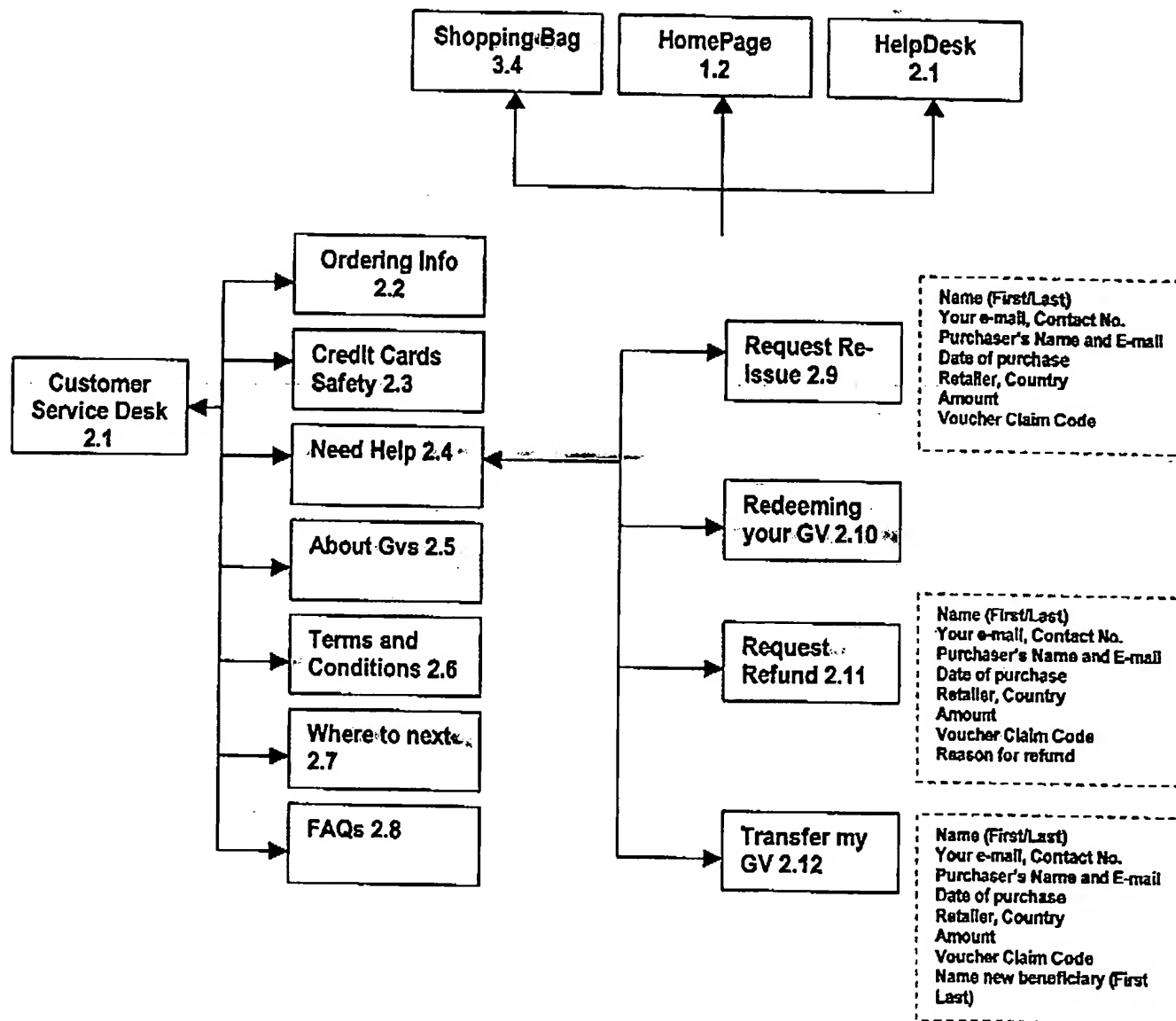


FIGURE 4

## Attachment C: Retailer Entry

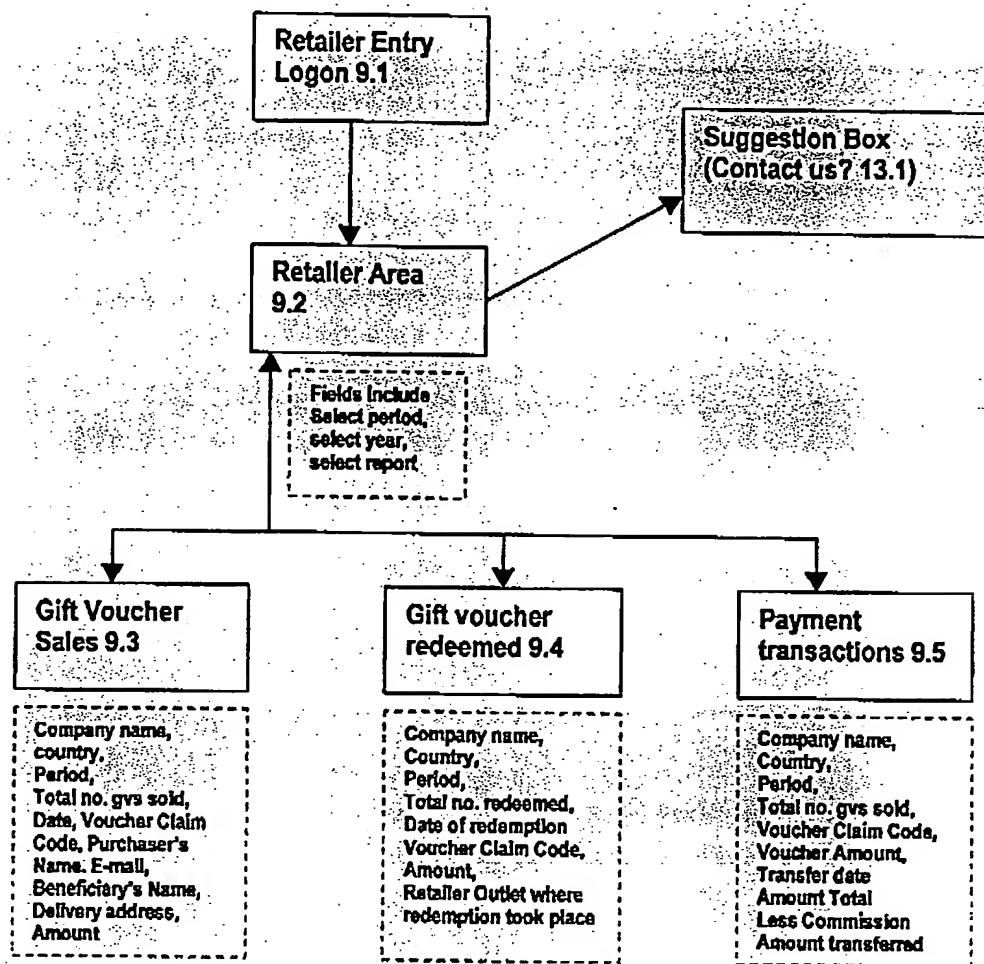


FIGURE 5

# Attachment D: Member Express Entry

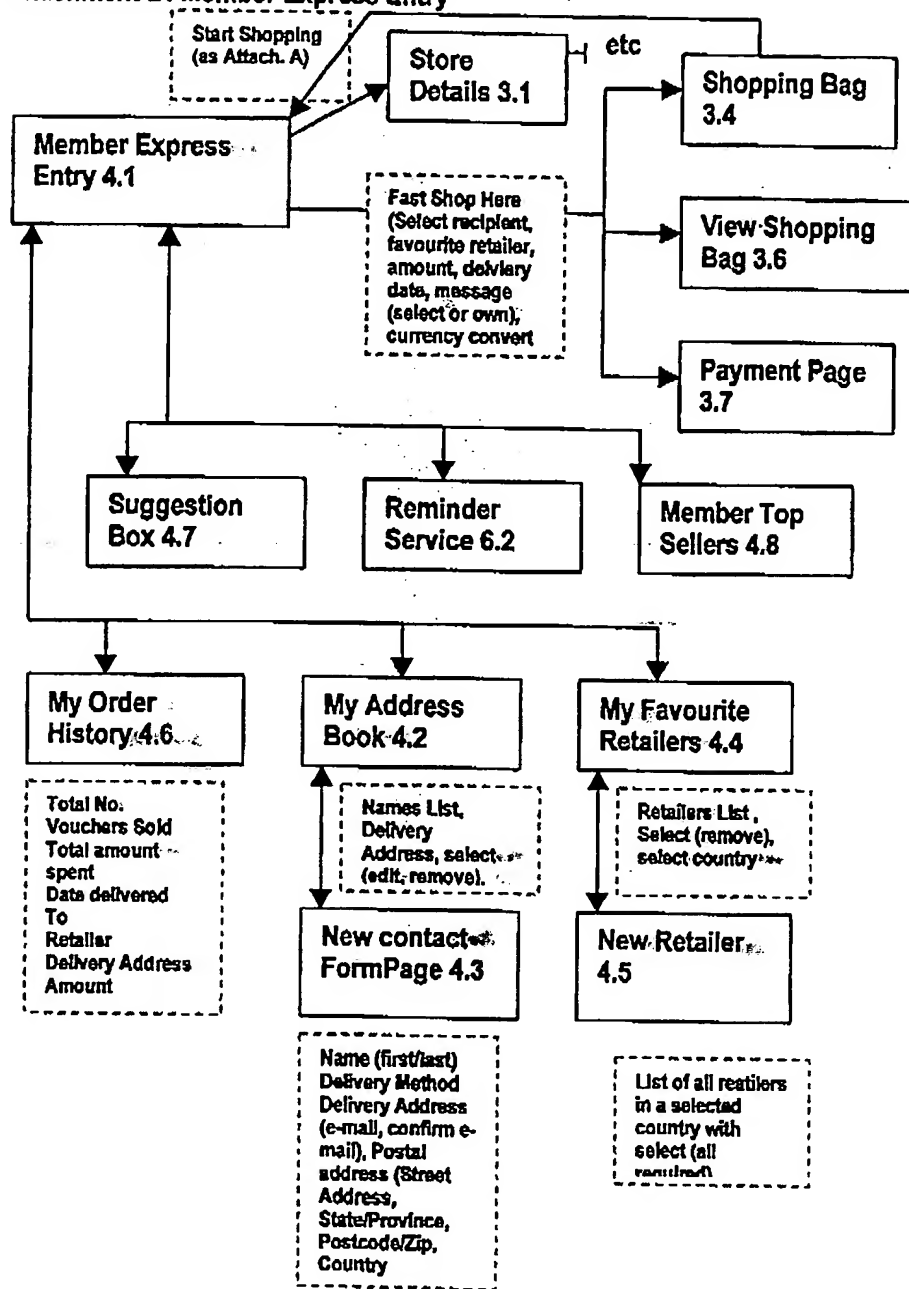


Figure 6

## Attachment E: Gift Bank

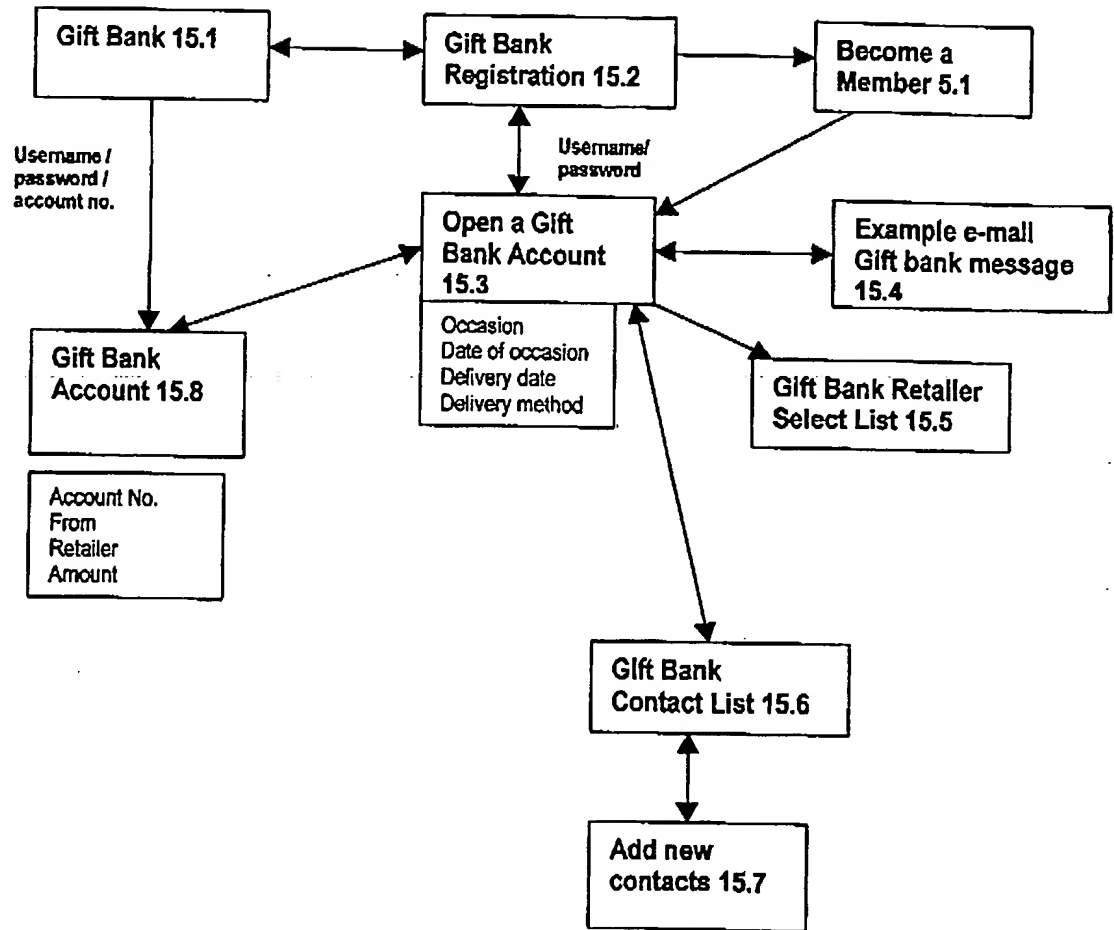


FIGURE 7

## Attachment F: Corporate Sales

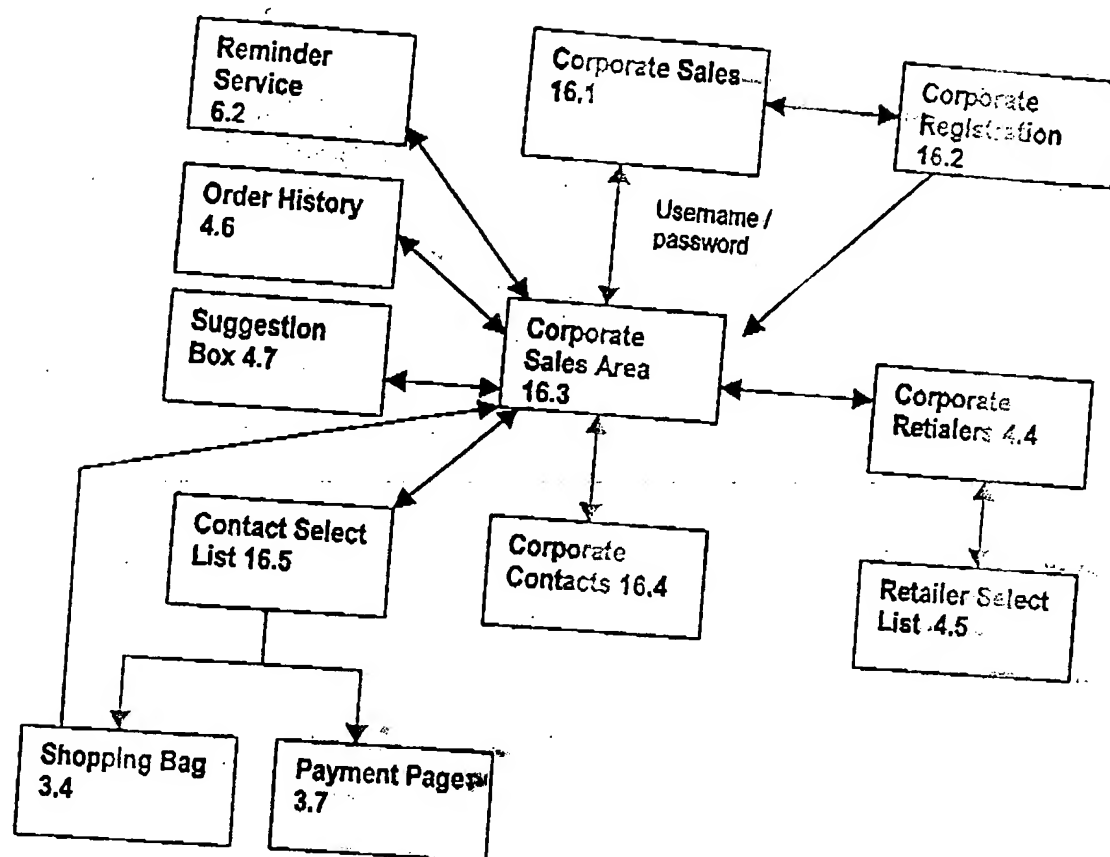


FIGURE 8